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AN L.A. CURSE

On the old man in his blue Dodge Dart
doing 40 on the 405,
face tensed against a fusillade as I blast by;

On the tiny woman from Elsewhere,
stretching to see over her wheel, strained
forward as if hoping to win by a nose;

On the tourist, map in hand, slowing
to squint at every street sign when I'm late,
and the slightest touch of fenders
will rocket my insurance rates into deep space;

On the maniac whose jacked-up Mustang
blinds me with its brights, then burns by
on the left shoulder, threading through traffic
like Crazy Legs Hirsch while I howl for the cops
and pray to pass him spun out, his hot car in flames;

On the average driver who would queue up
dutifully behind the blaze, banging
his steering wheel, cursing the government,
the freeway system, and all other drivers
stuck and going nowhere just like me.

—Charles H. Webb

Los Angeles, CA